

CultureTalk Egypt Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
No Swearing in Nubian

English translation:

Man (right 2): The word Egypt is originated from Copt¹. In Arabic we call Egypt another name which is Misr².

Man (left): Yes you are right the word Copt turned into Egypt.

Man (right 1): Yes, we got the Arabic name Misr from Holy Quran.

Woman (middle): The Arabs call Egypt "Misr" from Arabic thanks to the basis of the Holy Quran. But when foreigners speak about the country they say "Egypt."

Man (left): I will tell you exactly why we say Misr. It is the children of Ham. There is Misraim and Kosh. The Egyptian people are the descendants of Misra'im. I think the Nubians are the descendants of Kosh. Misra'im is changed to Misr later.

Man (right1): Misr also means a building on the river bank.

Man (left): But where do these words come from? One man named Misra'im, who was the son of Ham and was present in this land ...

Man (left): No, I think that there was a man called Mis. Nubians came from Kush³.

((Talking together ...not clear voice))

Man (right 1): Nubian language is different from other languages because it does not involve bad names or swearing. This is what I know... There is no curse words at all.

Woman (middle): What is the origin of the curse words then?

Man (right 1): I don't know.

¹ The Copts are by far the largest Christian community in North Africa and the Middle East. The word "Coptic" was originally used in Classical Arabic to refer to Egyptians in general.

² Miṣr, the Arabic and modern official name of Egypt (Egyptian Arabic: Maṣr), is of Semitic origin, directly cognate with other Semitic words for Egypt such as the Hebrew מִצְרַיִם (Mitzráyim), literally meaning "the two straits" (a reference to the dynastic separation of upper and lower Egypt). The word originally connoted "metropolis" or "civilization" and also means "country", or "frontier-land".

³ Kush civilization is centered in the region of Nubia. It is located in what is today northern Sudan. One of the earliest civilizations to develop in the Nile River Valley, Kushite states rose to power before a period of Egyptian incursion into the area. People in Kush were called Kushites.

Woman (middle): From Arabic?

Man (right 1): Yes, from Arabic... Yes, if I want to call somebody a bad name I use Arabic. Nubian language clearly has no curse words.

Woman (middle): There are no curse words in this language at all? Not any curse word at all?

Man (right 1): No...no....

Woman (middle): Strange!

Man (left): Yeah, that is true we don't have swearing words. We take words from Arabic.

Man (far left): Nubians may be assaulted verbally by the people who do not understand our language. Sometimes others hear Nubians speak together their language and they don't like it.

Woman (far left): Because the majority of people, when they ride the microbus for example, and they have Nubians with them and the Nubians start speaking together in Nubian, the others think "Oh they are speaking Nubian so they must be insulting us! One of us did something so they are insulting us!" They do not understand that we have no insults in our language. And that when we want to insult, we just use Arabic.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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